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ABSTRACT

A description of the sophomore level speech communication fundamentals course offered at Wauwatosa East High School in Wisconsin is presented in this paper. Following a statement of a philosophy of teaching communication theory, the major portion of the paper contains descriptions of the five units of the course: (1) communication concepts and principles, (2) intrapersonal communication, (3) interpersonal communication, (4) public communication, and (5) mass communication. The paper also provides a list of 40 fundamental principles and concepts of communication. A selection of 11 original essays in human communication for high school students and descriptions of two additional speech communication courses offered at the school are appended. (FL)

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TEACHING COMMUNICATION THEORY AT WAUWATOSA EAST HIGH SCHOOL

A paper presented at the annual convention of the Speech Communication Association in New York, New York, November 15, 1980

by

Craig R. Streff

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TEACHING COMMUNICATION THEORY AT WAUWATOSA EAST HIGH SCHOOL

Craig R. Streff

Wauwatosa East High School is a three-year senior high school in a large suburb of Milwaukee. Its enrollment is about 1200 students. Within the English-Speech Department, three one-semester courses in speech communication are offered:

(1) Speech Communication Fundamentals (required of all sophomores),
(2) Argumentation and Logic (elective for juniors and seniors),
(3) Seminar in Advanced Communication (elective for juniors and seniors. This is strictly a theory course).

This presentation will be devoted primarily to a description of the sophomore Speech Communication Fundamentals course. Time does not permit a description of the other two courses; however, I believe an understanding of the nature of these courses can be derived from their titles and the one-page course descriptions of each which are included in this paper.

This presentation contains three major sections:
(1) A philosophy of teaching communication theory,
(2) An identification of major concepts and principles taught,
(3) An explanation of some of the methods used in teaching them.

I. Philosophy

Succinctly stated, I believe that there is a tendency within the Speech Communication field to teach courses, not a discipline. There is a tendency to teach units, not unifying principles. There is a tendency to teach skills, not structure. We teach students how to communicate without teaching them what communication is. We teach students to use language, but they really have no idea what language is. The essence of our discipline is spoken symbolism. The essence of our humanity is spoken symbolism. They have no idea of the relationship of the spoken to the written word. They have no concept of communication as "process."

I believe that the communication concepts and principles which form the basis of the courses I teach and, accordingly, this presentation, not only can be taught and learned effectively in the secondary fundamentals course but also that they must be taught and learned there. However, because they are not being taught, our students are

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not learning the structure of the discipline and are prone to perceive our discipline as one which belongs among the ranks of Driver's Education, Physical Education, Home Economics, and Industrial Arts. They do not perceive it as one deserving of or expecting the intellectual rigor associated with such courses as Math, Chemistry, Physics, or our stepmother, English. Void of a concentration on the concepts which are central to our discipline, students and the public-at-large see us as teachers of a craft, producers of activities, directors of exercises, and hosts of rap sessions. I decry the standards to which we have allowed our discipline to exist. I endorse the Brunerian notion that any concept can be taught in an intellectually honest way to students, and it is the teaching of those fundamental concepts which the fundamentals course should to a large extent be about. I believe further that the "Back to Basics" movement and the narrowly defined approach to communication competencies so much in vogue within our own conventions as well as within society in general may yet be hammering another nail into the coffin by which we are sealing our own doom as a bona fide discipline.

Having attended countless conventions, having cooperated with more than a dozen student teachers from five colleges and universities and finding them nearly totally unprepared to teach the concepts which form the basis of the discipline, and having examined curricula from several states, it is my perception that where "speech" courses are taught on the secondary level, they are still taught much as they were ten, twenty, forty years ago with the possible addition of numerous exercises and games associated loosely with the genre of interpersonal communication. Essentially, only the name of the course has been changed. Very seldom is communication theory really taught as an integral, major portion of the course. The absence of any secondary texts which seriously attempt to teach the concepts and principles of the discipline illuminate the fact.

Having raked the status of the teaching of our discipline over the coals, permit me to identify the major concepts and principles which are taught in the fundamentals course at Wauwatosa East High School.

II. Concepts and principles

Understand first that the fundamentals course I am about to describe is more than just a theory course. It does emphasize the development of skills. It is divided into five units, the latter four always being related to the first:

(1) Communication concepts and principles	(6-7 weeks)
(2) Intrapersonal communication	(1-2 weeks)
(3) Interpersonal communication	(2-3 weeks)
(4) Public communication	(5-6 weeks)
(5) Mass communication	(1 week)
	18 weeks

This paper will elaborate on Unit 1, Communication concepts and principles, and will provide a one-page description of the other four units.

Unit 1. Communication concepts and principles includes:

A. models of the communication process, especially the traditional Shannon-Weaver model and Dance's helix.
B. lectures/discussions on many of the 40 "Fundamental Principles and Concepts of Communication." (See attached list).
C. read aloud and discuss/analyze the essays in the book, Essays in Human Communication for High School Students. (See the attached pages which include the titles and major concepts and principles in each essay).
    1. Students are frequently given the assignment to select a significant concept or principle in the essays and to write a 150-200 word paper on them. They may also be asked to provide a 40-word abstract (condensed version) of their paper to be read aloud in class for the purpose of follow-up discussion and feedback.
    2. short quizzes are also used for feedback.
    3. two essay exams (mid-term and final) are also useful for evaluation and feedback. After the exams have been graded and returned, I review each question and provide feedback regarding what I was looking for in the answers.
D. Late in the course, I assign one speech in the public speaking unit to be on a concept or principle of communication. This is a 3-4 minute speech to inform which combines a public speaking performance with a review of communication theory.

UNITS 2 - 5 IN THE FUNDAMENTALS COURSE

Unit 2. Intrapersonal Communication

1. relate/review models of communication
2. we communicate with ourselves more than with others
3. the way we communicate with ourselves highly influences how we communicate with others, and vice-versa
4. each person is unique and complex
5. read an essay dealing with significant learnings in intrapersonal communication and how they also influence interpersonal communication. Students write a paper on what they perceive as the most significant learning as it applies to their lives.

Unit 3. Interpersonal Communication

1. relate/review models of communication
2. we need to communicate with each other to "become" ourselves
3. read an essay about interpersonal dialogue. Students then write a paper on Martin Buber's "I-It vs I-Thou" modalities of relating with others.
4. discuss personal relationships and how communication concepts and principles relate to them. For example:
    a. friendship
    b. communication within the family
    c. confirming and disconfirming listening responses - key exercise associated with this item
    d. analyze 25 specific interpersonal messages, such as apology, compliment, criticism, promise
5. discuss interpersonal communicative maturity

Unit 4. Public Communication

1. relate/review models of communication
2. teach classical canons of rhetoric
3. 4 minute speeches (each student should deliver at least 4 or 5 from this list):
    a. speech to inform
    b. speech to persuade
    c. speech to impress on a significant current concern
    d. special occasion speech (in auditorium using lectern and microphone, house lights out, spotlights on)
    e. speech on a communication concept
    f. final exam speech (final exam consists of two parts: and essay test and any type of 4-minute speech).

Unit 5. Mass Communication

1. relate/review models of communication
2. discuss living in a highly communicative environment
3. selectivity in information reception & media analysis
4. distinctions bewteen pornography and art in mass communications

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES & CONCEPTS OF COMMUNICATION

1. We cannot not communicate.

2. The individual is the basic unit of communication.

3. Man is human and unique because of his human communication system which is based on and developed through speech communication.

4. Communication involves the presence of a source, message, transmitter, medium, channel, receiver, and destination.

5. Speech Communication is a process, not just an event, which is helical.

6. Communication is a complex process involving the behavior of the total organism.

7. Man lives in a world of symbolic as well as physical reality.

8. Functions essential to human development are inherent in all speech communicatio experiences.
   a. integration of the individual with his social environment.
   b. development of the individual's mental processes.
   c. control of human behavior.

9. Speech communication development follows the same pattern both ontogenetically (for the individual) as it did for the species (phylogenetically

10. Communication structures the relationship between all persons, animals, and things. Communication is interaction.

11. Speech communication has emergent primacy and ongoing potency.

12. Communication processes are manifest in all art forms and life forms.

13. Meaning is found in people, not in symbols; meaning is determined by one's perception of the signal, the context in which it exists, and the experience of the receiving individual to which the receiver relates it.

14. Only human beings can communicate concepts, ideas, principles. Animals, for example, communicate only moods, feelings, emotion.

15. Speech Communication can cause and resolve conflict.

16. Communication is a means of satisfying interpersonal and psychological needs.

17. Interpersonally, communication with others can generally be classified into two modalities, <u>I-It</u> and <u>I Thou</u>. (Martin Buber's distinctions)

18. Communication exists for the most part on four human levels:
    1. intrapersonal, 2. interpersonal, 3. public, and 4. mass

19. Man has three fundamental needs (Robert Ardrey's list of fundamental motives) which direct the manner in which he uses speech communication.
    1. identity, 2. security, 3. stimulation

20. All communication reveals something about the communicator, and consequently. all communication, especially speech communication, entails risk.

21. All communication reveals power.

22. Speech communication is central phenomenologically to the human condition.

23. Speech communication is central psychologically to the human condition.

24. Words serve as sorting devices.

25. There is an inherent relation between vocabulary and intelligence.

26. Symbolic communication is characterized by:
    a. the semantic principle of non-identity.
    b. the semantic principal of non-allness.
    c. the semantic principal of self-reflexiveness.
    (Korzybski's principles of general semantics)

27. Only human beings possess symbolizing capacity (language).

28. Human communication is extragenetically determined.

29. Animal communication is genetically determined.

30. Speech communication is at once both an integrating and individualizing process.

31. It is inevetable that communication emerges from and is structured by individual perception.

32. Speech communication entails design features which distinguish it as unique, complex, most effective, and most efficient in the process of information, production and reception. (From Charles Hockett, "The Origin of Speech", Scientific American 203 (No. 3, 1960) pp. 88-96.)
    1. Vocal-Auditory Channel
    2. Rapid Transmission and Broadcast Transmission - Directional Reception
    3. Rapid fading of Signal
    4. Interchangeability
    5. Total Feedback
    6. Specialization of function
    7. Semanticity
    8. Arbitrariness
    9. Discreteness
    10. Productivity
    11. Displacement
    12. Traditional Transmission (White: "All culture depends on the symbol")
    13. Duality of patterning

33. All aspects of written language, including punctuation forms, are extensions of, or related to, the spoken word. Punctuation symbolizes paralanguage (inflection) It represents second stage symbolism.

34. The more complex the communication network, the greater the potential for noise to distort the communication within it.

35. Information is anything which reduces uncertainty.

36. Communication is not restricted to words, either written or spoken, and gestures. Communication may also be accomplished through the use of time, space, and color.

37. Human communication is both anthroposemiotic and zoosemiotic.

38. The more concise the communication message, the less precise it is likely to be.

39. The process of communication does not necessitate the presence of information in the message.

40. Relatively accurate linguistic communication is made possible by the use of significant symbols.

ESSAYS IN
HUMAN COMMUNICATION
FOR
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Craig R. Streff

A COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL ESSAYS

FOR SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION COURSES

IN THE

WAUWATOSA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

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TITLES OF ESSAYS AND MAJOR CONCEPTS THEREIN

ESSAY 1. "COMMUNICATION AND OUR HUMANITY"

- we often fail to recognize and appreciate the uniqueness of the human condition.
- man differs from animal primarily in kind but also in degree.
- differences between man and animal are essentially communication differences.
- the process of communicating through symbols is fundamental to our our growth, development, and behavior as human beings.
- speech communication both integrates us with others and individualize us from others.
- speech communication enables man to be the "timebinding" animal.

ESSAY 2. "THE MEANING OF COMMUNICATION"

- communication is defined as the eliciting of a response.
- human communication (speech communication) is defined as the eliciting of a response through symbols.
- effective human communication is defined as the eliciting of a desired response through symbols. (All definitions are derived from the teachings of Frank E.X.Dance).
- the "function of argument" is explained.
- there is a brief section on the four levels of speech communication: intrapersonal, interpersonal, public, and mass.

ESSAY 3. "SPEECH COMMUNICATION: A MENTAL AND PHYSICAL PROCESS"

- the brain is the most important organ of speech and controls all the organs by which we communicate.
- the human cortex controls all symbolic functioning and is far more advanced than that of animals'cortex.
- thinking, encoding, structuring, transmitting, and responding are all physiological processes involved in speech communication. Together they comprise a "mental" process often underestimated and unappreciated.

ESSAY 4. "SIGNALS: SIGNS AND SYMBOLS"

- We live in a world of abstract and concrete reality.
- all messages consist of signals.
- there are two kinds of signals: signs and symbols. Each is defined and elaborated on in this essay.
- language, signals, signs, symbols, and significant symbols are all defined in this essay; examples of them are provided.
- the distinction between perception and conception is made.
- the power of symbols and symbolic capacity is discussed.

ESSAY 5. "WHY DO WE COMMUNICATE?"

- a review of the traditional and common purposes of speech is discusse
- Schutz's interpersonal needs (inclusion, affection, and control) are explained and how speech communication fulfills them is discussed
- Ardrey's psychological needs (identity, stimulation, and security) are explained and how speech communication fulfills them is discussed
- factors affecting the intensity and extensity of the spoken word as it relates to the fulfilling of human needs are discussed.

ESSAY 6. "FOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS"

- there are four communication skills which emerge in this order: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- the "basics" are listening and speaking (not reading and writing).
- the written word is an extension of, a substitution for, the spoken word.
- the spoken word is basic to the human condition in three ways: developmentally, interpersonally, and physiologically.
- punctuation and rules of writing are derived from speech communication factors. E.G., punctuation is a written code which is designed to represent inflection of the spoken word.

ESSAY 7. "LISTENING"

- listening is an active process, not a passive one.
- listening is a social process, not only a cognitive one.
- it is important to both others and us that we listen well.
- this essay is divided into two parts:
  a. how good listening is important to us intellectually
  b. how good listening is important to us interpersonally
- corrective feedback and the internalization of feedback are important factors in the development of listening skills.
- the ability to listen forms the basis of the child's ability to decenter.
- listening barriers and good listening patterns are discussed.

ESSAY 8. "ANIMAL COMMUNICATION"

- the importance of communication within an animal society is discussed.
- this essay addresses 4 major distinctions between animal and human communication:
  a. animal communication is strictly sign communication.
  b. animal communication is species-specific.
  c. animal communication is ritualistic.
  d. animal communication is affective, never purposeful or conceptual.
- characteristics of animal communication contribute to both the reproduction and survival of the species.

ESSAY 9. "THE FUNCTIONS OF SPEECH COMMUNICATION"

- the "functions" of speech communication (as proposed by Dance) are contrasted with the "purposes" of speech communication to clarify the distinction.
- the 3 functions are explained:
  a. the linking (integrating) function
  b. the mentation function
  c. the regulating function
- this essay discusses the importance of the three functions to the development of the individual's human potential.

ESSAY 10. "PROBLEMS USING LANGUAGE"

- words (symbols) can be constructive or destructive tools
- basic principles of semantics and general semantics are discussed.

ESSAY 10,"PROBLEMS USING LANGUAGE"(CONTINUED)

- the Ogden and Richards semantic triangle is explained.
- meaning exists in the individual, not in words.
- the universe is in a state of flux. We are changing as we are attempting to describe something, someone (referent) while it is changing. Language artificially permanizes.
- most of this essay is devoted to an explanation of Korzybski's 3 principles of general semantics and how they pose inherent problems which affect our thinking, communication, and behavior:
  a. non-identity principle
  b. non-allness principle
  c. self-reflexiveness principle

ESSAY 11. "ABUSING LANGUAGE"

- the essay reviews the importance of communicating through language to the human condition and encourages respect for this unique ability.
- it recalls the many ways in which we can also misuse language, as in backbiting, heckling, lying,slandering, etc.
- it concentrates primarily on using profanity, cursing, and divides this type of abusive language into three categories:
  a. abusive language which deals with deity
  b. abusive language which deals with bodily excretions
  c. abusive language which deals with sex
- the essay discusses reasons as to why we should not abuse language in these ways, such as:
  a. respect for God, our human condition, and natural functions
  b. respect for language itself and language capability
  c. respect for the sensitivities of others
  d. respect for cultural amenities
  e. respect for the fact that language is one of the fabrics which holds society together.
  f. responsibility to preserve cultural and moral standards

SEMINAR IN ADVANCED COMMUNICATION

This one-semester course is an elective course for juniors and seniors, although it is taken primarily by seniors. It is a theory course, not a practice course. The purpose of the course is to explore the complex and fascinating discipline of human communication.

Subject matter to be covered early in the course includes the folowing which will be lectured, discussed, and directed primarily by Mr. Streff:

a. the role of curiosity and communication in advanced (higher) education. This is preliminary to the "seminar" process.
b. review of the models of communication
c. the centrality of the spoken word
d. the uniqueness of speech communication
e. the communication explosion
f. principles of semantics and general semantics
g. "the 40 significant concepts of communication theory"
h. language, thought, and perception
i. pornography vs art: a humanistic approach to distinguish them
j. communication, human relations, and mental illness
k. phylogenesis and ontogenesis of human communication

Subject matter to be covered in class by students working in groups and providing group lectures/discussions are noted below. Students will work in groups of two or three, will take a subject, research it, and put together a presentation which lasts about half the period. The remainder of the period will be spent in seminar fashion in which the rest of the class reacts to and discusses with the presenters the ideas and concepts addressed in their presentations.

a. perception and communication
b. personality and communication
c. "nonverbal" communication
   (proxemics, kinesics, paralanguage)
d. conflict and communication
e. semantics and general semantics
f. urbanism, noise, and stress
g. cross-cultural communication
h. speech and language disorders
   (especially stuttering and aphasia)
i. space, mobility, territoriality, and communication
j. listening
k. role-playing, role-taking, authenticating, and risk

While this is a high school course and students in it are high school students, it is also an advanced course and will be conducted frequently in a seminar fashion. The course will be approached as if we were in a college situation, learning together as "colleagues." In this respect, this course should be a good preparation for college work.

ARGUMENTATION AND LOGIC

This one-semester elective course for juniors and seniors is essentially divided into three units. What follows is a brief description of each.

I. Review of fundamental communication concepts and principles and introduce some new communication concepts and principles

a. review models of communication
b. review how "Speech makes man man" (the centrality conceptT
c. Man the "rational animal"
d. the development of critical thought
e. cognitive dissonance
f. elementary semantics and review of Korzybski's principles of general semantics

II. Logic and Inference

a. inductive reasoning
b. deductive reasoning
c. syllogism and enthymeme
d. fallacies
e. "Truth" vs "truth"
f. Continuum of Cogency

III. Argumentation

a. evidence and the criteria for evaluating it
b. fact
c. authoritative opinion
d. methods of definition, clarifying, classifying
e. distinction between understanding and agreeing
f. open- and closed-mindedness
g. psychological factors in argumentation
h. burden of proof and presumption
i. prima facie case
j. refutation (3 approaches)
   - on the basis of burden of proof
   - on the basis of 6 analytical methods
   - on the basis of counter-evidence
k. write, refute, and rebut editorials
l. cross-examination
m. analysis of policy systems